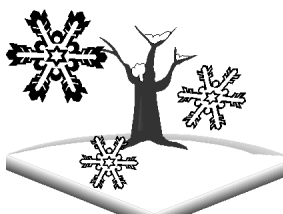


## Backgrounder—Extreme Cold and Winter Storms

### Emergency Information



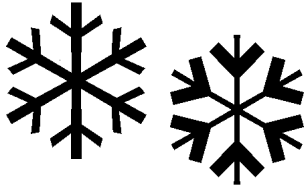
There are several ways your community may be given emergency information. Learn **how** your community will be warned (siren, radio, TV, etc.) in the event of a winter storm or extreme cold. The National Weather Service uses the following terms to convey information about winter weather to the public.

- Freezing Rain—Rain that freezes when it hits the ground, creating a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- Sleet—Rain that turns into ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet bounces when hitting a surface and does not stick to objects. An accumulation of sleet can make the roads slick and hazardous.
- Winter Storm Watch—Be alert; severe winter weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible within the next day or two.
- Winter Storm Warning—Take action; a storm is in or entering the area. Stay indoors. A Winter Storm Warning may be more specific and use one or more of the following terms:
  - Heavy Snow Warning—Snowfall of six inches or more.
  - Ice Storm Warning—Heavy accumulations of ice will make travel extremely dangerous and damage trees or power lines.
  - Blizzard Warning—Snow and strong winds combined will produce blinding snow, near-zero visibility, deep drifts, and life-threatening wind chill—seek refuge immediately!
- Winter Weather Advisory—Winter weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists. An Advisory may include one or more specific terms:
  - Snow Advisory—Snowfall of three to five inches.
  - Wind Chill Advisory—Dangerous wind chills of 35° below zero or colder.
  - Freezing Rain/Sleet Advisory—Light accumulations of ice will cause hazardous travel.
  - Blowing/Drifting Snow Advisory—Poor visibility and hazardous driving conditions.
- Frost/freeze warning—Below-freezing temperatures are

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expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees.



## Danger Zones

While the worst snowstorms typically occur in the northern United States, they can happen almost anywhere. Extreme cold temperatures are a concern nationwide. Even people living in tropical climates such as Florida should become educated about the dangers of hypothermia, faulty home-heating systems, and crop-damaging freezes.

## Help Your Community Get Ready

Media can raise awareness about winter storms and extreme cold by providing important information to the community. Here are some suggestions:



- Publish a special section in your local newspaper with emergency information about winter storms and extreme cold. Localize the information by printing the phone numbers of local emergency services offices, the American Red Cross, and hospitals.
- Periodically inform your community of local public warning systems.
- Conduct a series on how to protect yourself during a snowstorm at home, in a car, at the office, or outside.
- Interview local utility officials and CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps about home heating system safety.